

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method of efficiently serving content in a distributed computing environment,  
2 comprising steps of:
  - 3 receiving usage metrics for a particular stored object; and
  - 4 evaluating the received usage metrics to determine whether the particular stored object is
  - 5 stored in an appropriate location, and moving the particular stored location if not.
  
- 1 2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are received from a server.
  
- 1 3. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the received usage metrics are gathered by a  
2 system responsible for storing the particular stored object.
  
- 1 4. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are encoded in a Hypertext  
2 Transfer Protocol message header.
  
- 1 5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are encoded using syntax of  
2 a markup language.
  
- 1 6. The method according to Claim 5, wherein the markup language is HTML (“Hypertext  
2 Markup Language”).
  
- 1 7. The method according to Claim 6, wherein the syntax comprises a “META” tag using an

2 "HTTP-EQUIV" attribute syntax.

1 8. The method according to Claim 6, wherein the syntax comprises a "META" tag using a  
2 "NAME" attribute syntax.

1 9. The method according to Claim 6, wherein the syntax comprises a specially-denoted  
2 comment.

1 10. The method according to Claim 5, wherein the markup language is XML ("Extensible  
2 Markup Language").

1 11. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are received in response to a  
2 query for remotely-stored usage metric information.

1 12. The method according to Claim 11, wherein the query uses a WebDAV request.

1 13. The method according to Claim 12, wherein a response to the WebDAV request specifies  
2 usage metrics gathered by at least one server.

1 14. The method according to Claim 4, wherein the usage metrics are encoded using one or  
2 more cookies.

1       15.    The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are encoded in a Wireless  
2       Session Protocol message header.

1       16.    The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are expected popularity  
2       values.

1       17.    The method according to Claim 16, wherein the expected popularity values are provided  
2       by a user.

1       18.    The method according to Claim 16, wherein the expected popularity values are predicted  
2       by a content management system.

1       19.    The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are received as meta-data on  
2       a file access message.

1       20.    The method according to Claim 1, further comprising steps of:  
2           gathering usage metrics by a server; and  
3           sending the gathered usage metrics from the server; and  
4           wherein the received usage metrics are those sent from the server.

1       21.    The method according to Claim 20, wherein the sending step operates in response to a  
2       triggering event.

1 22. The method according to Claim 21, wherein the triggering event comprises expiration of a  
2 timer.

1       23.     The method according to Claim 21, wherein the triggering event comprises exceeding a  
2       threshold.

1 24. The method according to Claim 21, wherein the triggering event comprises receiving a  
2 query for the usage metrics.

16 25. The method according to Claim 20, wherein the gathering step further comprises  
17 gathering the usage metrics by analyzing an access log.  
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1 26. The method according to Claim 20, wherein the gathering step further comprises  
2 gathering the usage metrics by tracking access requests at the server.

1        27.     The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are expressed as a  
2        mnemonic.

1 28. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are expressed as a scaled  
2 number.

1        29.      The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are expressed as a  
2      percentage of access requests.

1        30.      The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are expressed as an actual  
2      number of access requests.

1        31.      The method according to Claim 1, wherein the usage metrics are expressed as a ranking.

1        32.      A system for efficiently serving content in a distributed computing environment using a  
2      network-attached storage (“NAS”) system, comprising steps of:

3                means for receiving, by a component of the NAS system, usage metrics for a particular  
4      stored object; and

5                means for evaluating the received usage metrics to determine whether the particular stored  
6      object is stored in an appropriate location, and for moving the particular stored location if not.

1        33.      The system according to Claim 32, further comprising:

2                means for gathering usage metrics by a server; and

3                means for sending the gathered usage metrics from the server; and

4                wherein the received usage metrics are those sent from the server.

1        34.      A computer program product for efficiently serving content using a network-attached  
2      storage (“NAS”) system, the computer program product embodied on one or more computer-

3       usable media and comprising:

4           computer readable program code means for receiving, by a component of the NAS

5       system, usage metrics for a particular stored object; and

6           computer readable program code means for evaluating the received usage metrics to

7       determine whether the particular stored object is stored in an appropriate location, and for moving

8       the particular stored location if not.

1       35.      The computer program product according to Claim 34, further comprising:

2           computer readable program code means for gathering usage metrics by a server; and

3           computer readable program code means for sending the gathered usage metrics from the

4       server; and

5           wherein the received usage metrics are those sent from the server.